IN THE DRAWINGS

The applicant submits herewith for the Examiner's approval revised Figure 3 with text labeling in the boxes as requested. The applicant respectfully submits that it is not necessary or desirable to add text labels to the boxes in Figure 1, as there are a lot of repetitive components and the character height limitations will require that the drawing be split onto separate pages. All of the components in Figure 1 are numerically annotated and therefore clearly identified with reference to the disclosure. If the Examiner nevertheless requires that text labels be added, the applicant will split Figure 1 onto multiple pages, however the applicant submits that this is unnecessary and the invention is better illustrated on a single page.

The applicant notes that the Office Action did not include a Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review and the Examiner did not comment on the drawings. The applicant requests that the filing of any formal drawings be deferred until the application is allowed.

REMARKS

The applicant affirms the applicant's election of claims 1 to 30. Claims 31 to 45 have been cancelled without prejudice to the applicant's right to pursue same in a division or continuation of this application.

The applicant has corrected the informalities raised by the Examiner in claims 7 and 12, and has amended the abstract to less than 150 words as required.

The Examiner has rejected main claims 1, 11 and 21 as being anticipated by Bell. The Examiner asserts that Bell meets the claimed limitation "the communications interfaces switching between master mode and slave mode responsive to a priority queue of upload demands from the plurality of communications interfaces." Without addressing the application of Bell to the remaining claimed features, the applicant respectfully disagrees with this assertion.

According to the preferred embodiment of the invention, the communications interfaces are biased to the slave mode, and can switch to the master mode based on a priority queue of upload demands (disclosure page 16, line 23 to page 17, line 6). On the other hand, Bell teaches a LAN system in which a computer is configured to assume the role of either master or slave, but only assumes the role of master "if the computer is the first (or only) computer powered up on the LAN" (col. 3, lines 25 to 28). During power up, the *first* computer configures itself as a master, and *subsequent* computers configure themselves as slaves (col. 5, lines 15 to 17). At col. 7, line 7 Bell states "Two other logic segments are denoted as "master configuration" 156 and "slave configuration" 158. In accordance with ***a fundamental aspect of the present invention***, when a first computer 112 is powered up, it configures itself as a "master" computer. In accordance with one embodiment of the present invention, when a computer 112 is first powered up it may broadcast a message within the LAN frequency band 128, which message is communicated to all other computers capable of listening to the LAN transmissions. Assuming no other computers are powered up, then no answer is made to this "broadcast" message. After a time-out period, the computer 112 which transmitted the broadcast message assumes that it is the first, and only, computer on the local area network, and it configures itself as a master."

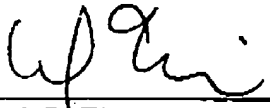
The sole condition for Bell's computer assuming the role of 'master' is whether or not there is any other computer powered up in the LAN that already has master status; if there is, then the computer configures as a slave. Only if the master computer is "lost" does another computer switch to master status (col. 8, lines 20 to 29). Bell does not teach any other circumstance in which a computer in the LAN will switch between master and slave status, and in fact states at col. 8, line 60 "If, however, the broadcast message of the computer is acknowledged (step 204) by one or more computers on the local area network, then the computer configures itself in a slave configuration (step 212). Thereafter, all WAN communications for that computer take place by first communicating through the master (step 214). ***The computer will effectively continue operating in that loop until it is powered down***."

In the present invention, only the master communications interface can upload data to the DSL distribution rack, but any communications interface can switch from slave to master status according to an upload queue priority. Following the upload to the LAN, the master communications interface transfers the 'master' status to the next communications interface in the queue, and becomes a slave communications interface: see disclosure page 16, line 23 to page 17, line 19.

The applicant has amended each of the main claims to recite this feature in the body of the claim, and submits that this distinguishes the present invention from Bell and the claims so amended are allowable. Favourable reconsideration and allowance of this application are therefore respectfully requested.

Executed at Toronto, Ontario, Canada, on February 28, 2005.

ROSS A. JEFFERY and MARC C. JAIRAM



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Encl. Revised Figure 3